

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 1997*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 1997, I was unavoidably detained during roll-call vote No. 98, the vote on agreeing to House Resolution 129, providing amounts for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the 105th Congress.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "no."

WITCZAK'S HARDWARE  
CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY**HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 1997*

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a Philadelphia business institution in my congressional district as it marks its 100th anniversary in providing a valuable service to the community.

On May 17, 1897, Stella and Stanislaw Witczak, two Polish immigrants seeking to serve the needs of a growing community in Philadelphia, opened the doors to Witczak's Hardware.

One hundred years later, Witczak's hardware is still serving the needs of this tightly-knit Port Richmond community. Its owner, Michael Witczak, is proud to be the third generation owner of one of the oldest privately owned hardware stores in a city that is steeped in history.

Mr. Speaker, Witczak's Hardware is a living example of what the American Dream is all about. For a century, the business has continued to provide the community with nuts, bolts, plumbing supplies, electrical items, spring plants, snow shovels, and a variety of other household and hardware items.

It has evolved in much the way the community it served has changed over a century. Where once customers would go to buy pull chains for water closets, coal oil and globe oil for lamps, customers now go for paints, keys, and window screens.

While the items have changed to meet the demands and expectations of a fast-paced society, the store itself hasn't changed much over the years. Customers are still old friends, the wooden floors are a familiar fixture and the owner can still help customers find that perfect gadget or tool to aid in home improvement projects.

This very presence is what is so important to a community and to the people it serves. Witczak's business, firmly rooted in the Port Richmond neighborhood, is an example for many generations to see.

These businesses provide examples for other future business owners that offering a service to a neighborhood is convenient, important and still needed in our country. It is the business strategy that made our Nation become the world economic leader it is and it is the hub in the wheel that made our neighborhood prosper.

At a time when, competition is at an all-time high and super stores and mega-malls are in-

creasing, stores like Witczak's are facing tough obstacles. Nonetheless, their role as the "little mom and pop" stores once so prevalent in our neighborhoods are needed.

The immigrants who started these businesses are to be commended for the spirit and energy they displayed in making their American dream of prosperity come true.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to congratulate Witczak's Hardware for serving as a fine example of an American business that blossomed, remains strongly entrenched in its community, and continues to provide a service to the neighborhood. May it stand as an example for future business owners that one family's vision can lead to a century of accomplishment.

## LIMA-ALLEN COUNTY RADIOTHON

**HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 1997*

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my best wishes and support to the Lima-Allen County, OH, branch of the NAACP, as its members make their final preparations for their annual radiothon. The event, planned for May 24 at the Bradfield Community Center in Lima, will join the Lima-Allen County branch with other branches of the NAACP from across the Nation in an effort to attract new members from the Lima-Allen County community, as well as to inspire old members to renew their commitment.

The chapter president, Rev. Robert Curtis, and my friend, Malcolm McCoy, deserve special recognition for their work with the organization. I wish them success in their upcoming radiothon and particularly commend their positive influence on the young people of Lima-Allen County.

CRAIG THORN III RECEIVES COLUMBIA COUNTY ASSOCIATION'S  
DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD**HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 1997*

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, on May 15, 1997, the Columbia County Association will bestow its Distinguished Citizen Award on Craig Thorn III. Anyone who knows him realizes how well-deserved this honor really is.

Mr. Thorn's career is notable for the degree to which he moved on the State and national political scene while maintaining his local business presence. Since Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's 1966 reelection campaign, Mr. Thorn has been actively involved in State politics. In 1968, he served as an advance man in Rockefeller's Presidential campaign. Later, he served as the upstate director of the Duryea gubernatorial campaign in 1978 and was the chief of staff for New York State Assembly Republicans from 1979 to 1982.

The creativity, enthusiasm and initiative that Mr. Thorn demonstrated in State politics also have been carried over into his civic activities. Currently, he serves as a vice chairman of the board of trustees of Columbia Memorial Hos-

pital and chairman of the Columbia-Greene Community Hospital Foundation, which last year kicked off a Second Century of Caring Capital Campaign that already has secured \$2 million toward a new emergency wing with surgical facilities.

Additionally, Mr. Thorn is a trustee of Columbia Economic Development Corp. and secretary of Hudson Development Corp. as well as a member of the board of managers of the Columbia Hudson Partnership, the umbrella economic development organization for the county and city. In this role, he has been an enthusiastic proponent of waterfront development in the city of Hudson and an active player in the complex negotiations that are now resulting in the removal of several longstanding oil tanks by the river, making way for a new public park.

Mr. Thorn also conceived and set in motion a Flag Day parade that will take place in Hudson on Saturday, June 14, and honor not only the American flag but the entire spectrum of volunteer organizations in Columbia County.

I could go on and list all of Mr. Thorn's other accomplishments, but I think I would run out of time and space. Needless to say, I commend the Columbia County Association's selection of Craig Thorn as the recipient of its Distinguished Citizen Award. His long record of serving his community and his State are a model for other citizens to follow.

TAKING A STAND FOR HEALTHY  
CHILDREN**HON. MARTIN FROST**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 1997*

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the Stand for Healthy Children Day that will be held on June 1. All across the Nation groups will be holding community health fairs focusing on the needs of our children. Ensuring that our children are healthy should be a top priority in this country and an issue that requires attention at all levels.

The Children's Defense Fund, in cooperation with communities all over the Nation will be working with local officials to educate parents and renew their commitment to improving the quality of our children's lives. Prevention and education is the key to giving children the healthy start they need.

In step with this important nationwide movement I am proud to participate in the Stand for Healthy Children for the 24th district at the Resource Center in Fort Worth, TX. This family picnic, sponsored by the National Stand for Children and the Community Health Foundation, will focus on teaching kids and parents about preventative health and safety. Free children's health screenings will be offered, and officers from the Fort Worth Police Department will be making identification cards for children. In addition, kids from all over Fort Worth will be able to participate in fun-filled activities, like art contests, story-telling, and other events.

Bringing families together to talk about their children's health care is essential. By holding these health fairs, we can address concerns and work effectively to improve the quality of life for our children.